

REMARKS

Applicant would first like to bring to the attention of the Examiner a few "housekeeping" issues related to correcting the record:

- 1.) the Examiner issued a PTO-Form 892 in the first office action listing "US-7,301,644 B2" as a reference, but applicant believes the correct citation is US 7,301,664 B2;
- 2.) the Examiner failed to initial the Non-Patent Literature document in the disclosure statement acknowledged by the Examiner on December 22, 2008 and forwarded to applicant with the first Official Action; and
- 3.) the Examiner has not acknowledged the disclosure statement filed on April 14, 2006 with the original application, which listed JP 2000-299777A and JP 2001-356894A along with a copy of the relevant portion of the International Search Report.

It is requested that the Examiner correct the record with respect to item (1) and that properly initialed copies of the disclosure statements be returned to the application with respect to items (2) and (3).

By the entry of this amendment, claims 1-21 and 28-42 have been cancelled. Claims 22-27 and 43 remain pending in the application.

Claims 25, 27 & 43 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ferlitsch (US 6,806,977 B1) in view of Ishii et al. (US Patent 5,598,279). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Claim 25 is directed to an image printing system having a plurality of image output apparatuses, each apparatus having an input element for inputting image data, an instruction element for instructing by an operator to print out, a printing element for printing out image data using a printing device, and removal opening corresponding to the printing device, comprising: an assigning element for assigning the image data to the printing device of at least one of the image output apparatuses; and a printed item conveying device for conveying printed items to the removal opening of the image output apparatus instructed by the operator. According to the claimed invention, even when image data are assigned to a plurality of printers, the user can remove the printed items from one printed item removable opening. Thus, the work load placed on the user can be reduced and mix-ups between the user's printed items and those of others can be prevented ([0043] or [0190] Specification).

The Examiner indicates that Ferlitsch does not explicitly teach a removal opening and a printed item conveying device, but that Ishii et al. teaches rollers that feed the printed material to the appropriate bins or removal openings. However, all of Bins 111a-111x shown in Ishii et al.

are provided in a single printer. Applicant notes that the printing system of the claimed invention, as mentioned above, has a plurality of image output apparatuses, each apparatus having the input element, the instruction element, the printing element, and removal opening corresponding to the printing device. Further, the printed item conveying device conveys printed items to the removal opening of the image output apparatus instructed by the operator. Thus, even if Ferlitsch could be combined with Ishii et al., the resulting combination would not provide sufficient rationale for finding claim 25 *prima facie* obvious as required under 35 U.S.C. 103..

Claim 27 recites an image output method corresponding to claim 25 and comprises substantially same limitations as claim 25. Claim 43 recites a recording medium on which is recorded a program which causes a computer to function as an image printing system and comprises substantially same limitations as claim 25. Therefore, Applicant believes also claims 27 and 43 should be allowable.

Claims 22, 23, 24 and 26 have been amended to depend on claim 25 respectively. Therefore, Applicant believes also claims 22, 23, 24 and 26 should be allowable.

In view of the above, all of the claims in this case are believed to be in condition for allowance, notice of which is respectfully urged.

Respectfully submitted,

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DATE

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